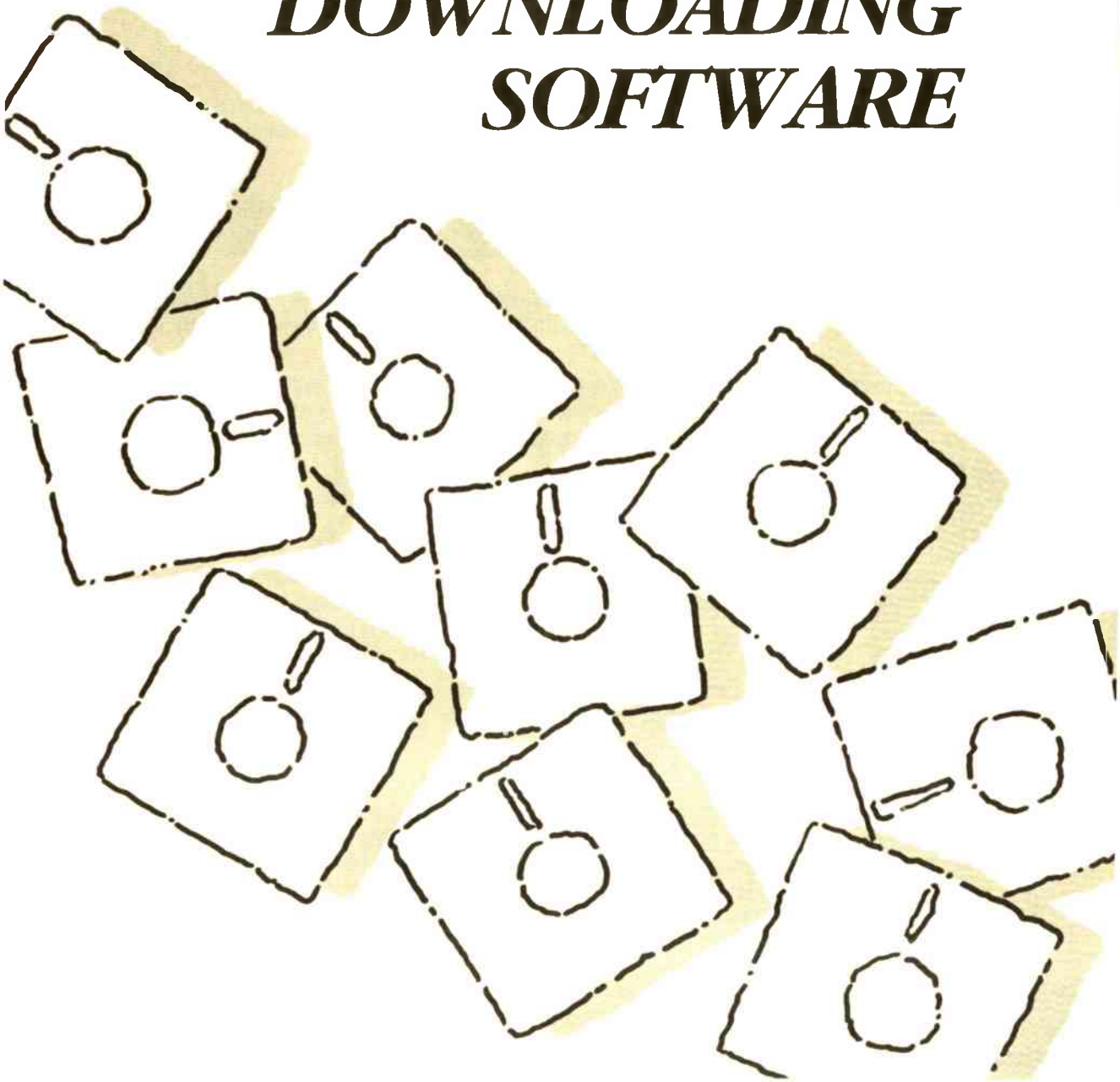
GUIDE TO DOWNLOADING SOFTWARE



Q-LINK GUIDE TO DOWNLOADING SOFTWARE

Keep this downloader's checklist near your Commodore to use when you need to double-check the next step in the downloading process. For more information on downloading, loading and running your programs, go to the Members' Online Guide in the Customer Service Center or the Commodore Information Network's Downloading Help Desk and General/Beginner's Support Group.

I. Format a Disk

Before you can download a file, you must format a disk. Formatting the disk tells the drive where to write information; this allows you to receive and save downloaded programs. It also creates a directory of files you have saved to the disk (See "Displaying Your Disk Directory" below). Do not use your Q-Link Program Disk to store files; trying to download a file onto your Q-Link Program Disk could damage it. Instead, use blank formatted disks.

NOTE: Formatting a used disk will ERASE all existing files on that disk. You only need to format a disk the first time you use it, unless you wish to erase a used disk so you can use it again.

To format a disk:

1. Turn on your computer, monitor, and disk drive. If your machine is a C128, hold down the Commodore key so it will boot up in C64 mode.

2. Put the disk you wish to format in the drive and close the drive door.

3. Type: OPEN15,8,15,"N0:diskname,id":CLOSE15

Don't leave any spaces in between characters. Then press the RETURN key.

NOTE: The "diskname" is the name you use to title your disk and can be up to 16 characters long. The "id" is the two character part of the name the computer uses to identify the disk. Use lowercase letters to name your file disks.

4. The flashing cursor will disappear while the drive formats the disk. The process takes about 70 seconds, and the screen will display the word "READY" and the cursor will return when formatting is complete.

5. If the red light flashes on your disk drive, it means an error has occurred during formatting; check to make sure the drive door is closed and that the formatting command was typed correctly down to the exact character. Turn the drive off, then on again, to clear the incorrect command before retyping the line.

II. Downloading a File

Once you've formatted a disk, you're ready to get on Q-Link and download a file. To do so:

1. Select the software library that contains the files in which you are interested. You will be given the option of viewing files by filename (listing of exact titles) or subject (listing of broad topic headings). Use the cursor key to move the check mark and make your choice, then press the F1 key to select the area you want.

2. Files are separated in the library by upload date for organizational purposes. Select date category from the menu of upload dates (the day and month the files were uploaded to the library) using the cursor key to move the check mark. Then press the F1 key to select.

3. Use the cursor to move the check mark to the specific file you want to download, then press the F1 key.

4. The download description of the program will include such information as the downloading time, additional files or equipment you might need, and the number of blocks (the amount of space the file will take up on your disk) that the program is. After reading the download description, press the F7 key for the download menu. You will have the option of reading comments about the file, which will give you hints from other Q-Link members on downloading and using the program. Write this

information down, or save file descriptions and comments to a disk by removing your Q-Link Program Disk, inserting a formatted disk into your drive, and pressing the F3 key.

You will not be disconnected during the download, even though you have removed the Program Disk temporarily.

5. Select the "Download This File" option and follow the directions on the screen, which will tell you when to insert a formatted disk. Download the program onto that disk by following the screen prompts.

6. When the download is complete, the screen will display a message announcing that the file has been copied to your disk. For versions 3 and 4 of the Program Disk, a bell will ring.

7. Remove the download disk and put your Program Disk back in the drive. Press the F5 key to back out of the download area to Q-Link.

III. Displaying Your Disk Directory

In order to use your downloaded files, you must first sign off Q-Link. To display your disk directory:

1. Type: LOAD "$",8 then press the RETURN key. The computer will take a few seconds to load the disk.

2. When the flashing cursor reappears, type: LIST and press the RETURN key. The diskname, id, filenames, number of blocks used by each file and number of blocks free on that disk will be displayed.

IV. Using Program Files

1. First, review the file descriptions and comments for the file you downloaded. Reading them will give you instructions for loading and running the program.

Downloadable Q-Link files are one of two types: Program (PRG) files or Sequential (SEQ) files. The file description will tell you which type of file it is and whether you need another file to read it.

2. For PRG files:

You can run program files using one of the two most commonly used LOAD commands: Type:

LOAD "filename",8 and press the RETURN key, then type RUN and press the RETURN key.

3. Or, type:

LOAD "filename",8,1 and press the RETURN key, then type RUN and press the RETURN key.

For SEQ files:
These files are either text files that require a sequential reader, or files that have been altered to make uploading and downloading easier.

4. If you have a Version 2 Program Disk, load the "Utility" function on that disk first, typing:

LOAD "UTILITY", 8 and pressing the RETURN key

Then follow screen instructions to view your main program.

5. If you have Version 3 or 4 of the Q-Link Program Disk, load the SPRINT reader from your Program Disk by typing:

LOAD "SPRINT",8 and pressing the RETURN key.

Then follow screen instructions to view your main program. The SPRINT utility may also be found in the News and Information's Entertainment Features section under Auditorium Archives.

NOTE: Turning the computer and disk drive off before and after each attempt will "clear" the old or incorrect commands. Disconnecting the peripherals could also help, because modems, printers and other add-ons may cause programs to load or run improperly.

Troubleshooting: A Few Tips

If you run into trouble downloading, the first place to go for help is the Downloading Help Desk, located on CIN's Software Libraries Menu. You'll find lots of help tips and answers to common downloading questions, and you can post your own questions on the Help Message Board. The Downloading Help Desk librarian will research your problem and post an answer for you.

If you've never downloaded before, begin with the Downloader's Starter Kit on the same menu. You'll find an online tutorial and practice download to guide you through the process each step of the way.

You can also get help from the Commmodore Information Network's Computing Support Groups. Choose the Support Group that corresponds to the type of file you tried to download. Check the Support Group message boards for postings from people who had similar problems and hints or solutions that might apply to your situation.

Simple Troubleshooting Hints:

1. While Formatting: If you receive a disk error message on your screen, the disk may not be formatted, or the file you wish to download will not fit on the disk you are using because there are not enough blocks free. You can clear the message by pressing the F5 key. Turn off the disk drive and turn it on again to reset it, then press the RETURN key to continue the downloading process.

2. While Downloading: Downloading speed can vary for a variety of reasons (you can find out the download time in the file description). One explanation for slow downloading is that the access number you're using may be overloaded, increasing the time it takes to carry information over the phone. You might try changing access numbers. To do so, check the "Changing Access Numbers" area of Connecting Information in the Members' Online Guide of the Customer Service Center.

Other factors that can increase download time are noise on the telephone line or errors noted during download by error-checks. These will cause Q-Link to resend information. To avoid this problem, disconnect peripherals connected to the drive or unplug all answering machines or cordless phones on your line.

If you discover any useful tips for downloading and running a specific file, please go back to the file's download menu in the Software Libraries, choose Post or Read Messages About This File, and leave your suggestions for others!

Q-Link Downloading Patch

Some people experience difficulty downloading lengthy programs while connected to Q-Link through Tymnet. There is a patch program that will correct the problem in most cases. It's called updateq, and can be found in the CIN Software Libraries in Q-Link Utilities in the Q-Link Disk Programs area.

Complete instructions for loading and running updateq can be found in the description attached to the program file. You may view these instructions by moving the check mark to the Q-Link Download Patch file and pressing the F1 key.

Follow the instructions to load updateq. When you're done, Q- Link will appear to function as before, but you should experience a decrease in downloading problems.

Omega-Q — The Ultimate Download Utility

Many of the Q-Link public domain files are made up of several separate files that are "squeezed" or condensed in some way to make downloading faster. Q-Link's Omega-Q file, available in the Downloader's Starter Kit and CIN's Software Libraries in the Q- Link Utilities section, performs the most often used disk operations in just a few easy steps, including "unsqueezing" or dissolving files so they are ready to use!

This single utility file combines nearly all of the incompatible archiving utilities and simplifies the programs for easy operation.

The simple, menu-driven file works much like Q- Link, with check marks and the four function keys guiding you to most commands. You can also use Omega-Q for formatting disk set-up, loading programs, reading disk directories and a variety of other disk "housekeeping" duties. Omega-Q is available only on Q-Link — just download Omega-Q once, and make dissolving files a snap forever more!